



December 30, 2014

Chairman Tom Wheeler
Commissioner Mignon Clyburn, Commissioner Jessica Rosenworcel,
Commissioner Ajit Pai, Commissioner Michael O'Rielly
c/o Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
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Washington, D.C. 20554

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Re: Comments in ET Docket No. 14-165 and GN Docket Nos. 12-268 and 14-166 Via Electronic Filing

Dear Chairman Wheeler, Commissioner Clyburn, Commissioner Rosenworcel,
Commissioner Pai, Commissioner O'Rielly and Ms. Dortch,

On behalf of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, located in Ashland, Oregon with an annual budget of \$34 million, that provides approximately 800 performances a year to 400,000 audience members and education programs for over 110,000 students, I write with concern about protection for our wireless microphones and backstage communications devices.

I understand the Commission has ruled that performing arts entities that regularly use 50 or more wireless devices will be eligible to apply for a Part 74 license. I have also learned that the FCC is seeking Comment on a proposed rule that would prevent performing arts entities using fewer than 50 wireless devices from participating in the database. This would leave my organization without any interference protection mechanism from the many TV Band Devices that may soon flood the market. Frequency coordination with other known wireless microphone users has become common practice, but there is no way to coordinate with TVBDs if you do not know about them.

Thousands of performances are held by professional performing arts organizations each year and the use of wireless microphones is both essential to producing high-quality performances and also mitigates against significant public safety concerns. Professional wireless capability, with successful interference protection, is essential to our sector.

OSF operates from February to November every year with multiple performances Tuesday – Sunday every week. The follow sums up our current equipment inventory:

- We use a variety of Sennheiser UHF Wireless microphones, including body mics, handheld mics, and plug-on transmitters (to make a regular mic wireless).
- We use Sennheiser Wireless In Ear Monitors (IEMs) for actor/musician foldback, as well as for making wireless speakers.
- We have wireless DMX control units as well as new wireless cue lights.
- Our inventory includes 28 channels of "A" band (Low UHF 516-558 MHz), 40 channels of "G" band (Low-High UHF 558-626 MHz) and 36 Channels of "B" band (High UHF 626-668)
- Our microphones are able to tune to more than one frequency. Some models have a 42 MHz bandwidth, and some have a 68 MHz bandwidth.
- All of our wireless mics and IEMs are within the TV bands. We also use Wireless Headsets for backstage communication. We have two types of systems in this category. One operates in the 900 MHz range and the other in the 1.92-1.93GHz range.
- All of the wireless mics and IEMs are analog. One wireless headset system is analog and the other is digital.

OSF has been riding the bandwidth wave as the rules have continued to change in the last decade. Since our performance runs are longer than average and we are in an isolated rural community, renting equipment is not practical. Therefore, must we purchase everything that we need and have already gone through one cycle of equipment upgrade due to the 700 MHz reallocation. This upgrade cost us \$40,000 in equipment and eight weeks to install. However, since that upgrade, we have also expanded our equipment inventory and become heavily dependent on the technology. Costs are difficult to estimate because we do not know what technology we would be moving to, but if it was similar to the previous change, costs would easily be over \$200,000 to replace what we own now.

Any given performance features 2 – 48 wireless mics and IEMs. If we were unable to use these for our musical performances (about 25% of our performances), we would no longer be able to do musicals. Additionally, 25% of our season is performed in our outdoor theater in which all performers are miced. At the Festival, we have 2 – 5 performances a day with microphones every Tuesday through Sunday, January 26 – November 3. There are an additional handful of Monday night events which also use the equipment. Wireless microphones are mission critical to the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, which itself is a major economic engine for Southern Oregon.

Cost and having a viable technology option are the biggest barriers to our moving out of the TV bandwidth.

I appreciate that the Commission has sought Public Comment on these very important issues. Professional performing arts organizations should all have some sort of interference protection. While some entities will be protected by access to the geo-location database, many professional performing arts organizations will not under this plan. Further, I would request that the Commission consider the burden already borne by the performing arts community in vacating the 700 MHz band. Per the cost estimate above, I am concerned about the cost of once again replacing my theatre's sound equipment and preserving business continuity.

Performing arts organizations provide demonstrable service to the public in improving quality of life; preserving our cultural heritage; and in providing education, enlightenment, entertainment. They also contribute to local economies in every community across this country. I respectfully request that the Commission maintain access to interference protection and establish a mechanism to reimburse performing arts organizations for the cost of new equipment.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Rider
Executive Director

c: Senator Ron Wyden, Senator Jeff Merkley, Congressman Greg Walden